

Minutes from Cedarbank Carer's & Parent Council Meeting

Wednesday 25th Jan 2023 6pm – 7:15pm

Attendees:

School: Carol McDonald (Head Teacher), Alison Lindsay (Deputy Head Teacher), Adam Cox, Iain Stewart,

Parent / Carers: Carol Evans (Chair), Marcia Edwards (Secretary), Jane Marshall (family wellbeing champion), Geraldine Brewster, Nikki Cooper, Joe Cooper, Brian Evans, Carolyn Smith, C Aitken, Mel Waton, Hester Wilson, Rebecca Bleach and Kara Ness.

Apologies Gill Doyle, Liesl Moore (Treasurer)

Introduction:

Carol Evans (CE) opened the meeting introducing herself as the new chair and Marcia Edwards (ME) as the new secretary, there were apologies from Liesl Moore the treasurer and Gill Doyle, who has been busy applying for grants / funding. CE then went on to mention the role of the parent council and that each parent / carer is automatically a member of the parent council.

The meeting was the first in the new building and the first for the new committee. Thank you to the school and pupils who served everyone a lovely plate of Scottish foods to complement Burns night including mini haggis and neeps spoons, haggis balls, cheese, quiche etc. We were very pleased to see much better attendance and broader pupil representation. We would still like more parents to attend, so please come along to the next meeting on Thursday 16th March 6-7.30 - tea / coffee and child care will be provided.

Achievements so far:

CE applied for funding and received a grant from John Watson's Trust which allowed the Christmas bowling trip for the whole school to take place. Gill Doyle was successful in applying for funding of £10,000 for the School camp. Further appropriate grants / funding will continue to be applied for. Looking to apply for grants that provide 3 year funding where possible.

Pupil Voice Update

Mr Cox, introduced Kirsty, a representative from the pupil council who gave the following update:

- The pupil council chose "Children with Cancer" as the school charity and raised £215.
- Pupils decided to use some of the school funds (Pupil Equity Fund) to help some families with the cost of school camp.
- Pupils have organised fruit and breakfast bars to be offered to all pupils first thing in the morning.

- Representatives from the pupil council, spoke to pupils in their tutor groups to find out what issues they would like to discuss and action, which led to the following :
 - More bins been available in the playground
 - Choosing new equipment and toys for outside in the outdoor area
- The young people in the Pupil Council will have a leadership role in helping organise equipment in the playground.
- They have organised dates for dress down days.
- They are currently preparing to write to the Inveralmond School kitchen supervisor who is responsible for organising all the lunches for Cedarbank to address some ideas they have.

All the parents applauded Kirsty for presenting the update so well, and agreed it would be very beneficial if there could be a pupil council representative at all the parent council meetings going forward. This would allow in the Parent Council to be updated on the work of the Pupil Council and helps to develop skills for pupils such as having the confidence to stand up in front of adults and present.

Head Teacher update:

Mrs. McDonald started by saying that the school fayre had raised £2800. Some of the PSWs had been making soup and selling to other school staff to raise funds to purchase a defibrillator for the school. Mrs McDonald asked if some of the money raised at the school fayre (£800) could be added to the money raised by the PSWs to purchase a defibrillator. Parents/carers present agreed that this would be a good idea.

Results of Survey

Out of the questionnaire sent out to gain parents / carers views such as what parents want from a parent council, timings of meetings and how many meetings a year for the parent council, 31 were returned.

- The following was proposed four meetings a year to take place as follows:
 - Early September (for the AGM) – 6-7.30
 - Early December
 - March
 - May (2-3.15pm) and / or
 - Possible social family summer joint school / parent council event May or early June in School hours with possible BBQ, games and fundraising stalls / events.

For the meetings to take place at different times during the day to ensure the maximum number of parents could attend

- A parent's event and a family event were popular responses
- Parents welcomed the idea of child care for parent council meetings to aid ease of attendance and the opportunity for their young people to service tea / coffee / refreshments as appropriate
- Minutes of parent council meetings to go out to all parents.

School Camp Update – Mr Stewart

- There is a total of (£12,484) to support the costs of the school camp made up as follows:
 - £2,300 from the Pupil Equity Fund
 - £184 remaining from December's bowling trip which did not have to be paid back.
 - £10,000 from successful funding application
- Out of the school camp questionnaire sent out to parents/carers, 50% responded and out of that 84% wanted to attend the school camp.
- Results mean approximately 100 pupils would be going, with some families struggling with the cost of the camp
- Mr Stewart proposed and was agreed by the parent council the following:
 - There will be 20 fully funded places.
 - The cost for all other pupils attending would reduce from £230 to £150.
 - The remaining money would be for extra staff to attend (requirement for one staff member to six pupils)
 - Insurance for the camp
 - Dates of school camp: Tuesday 13th June to Thursday 15th June 2023
- Letters to be sent out to all parents/carers on Thursday 26th January.
- Parents asked if there were any pictures / information of what activities the pupils would be doing. Letter would be sent out with information of activities and what to bring.
- Mr Cox mentioned that information about the camp could be shared by pupil council reps to each tutor group
- Some pupils have never been away (without parents / carers) before.
- Mrs. McDonald mentioned that there will be buses going to camp every day in case any pupils were struggling with being away.
- There were questions raised regarding pupils on medication, however Mr Stewart reassured that this would not be an obstacle for a pupil attending camp.
- Jane Marshall asked if there could be a social story about school camp.
- School camp update and question and answer session will be added to the agenda for the next parent council meeting in March

Health and Wellbeing Update - Jane Marshall

Jane Marshall is the Family Champion parent rep. This year the following work has taken place:

Contribution to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Three parent engagement sessions looking at supporting mental health and anxiety have already taken place. This has included the benefits of being outdoors, mental health, the use of social stories and visuals (CAMHs),

The post anxiety management presentation will take place tomorrow Thursday 26th January 2-3pm. The presentation can be shared.

The next two sessions will take place on 23rd Feb Zones of Regulation and 30th March Yoga and Massage to Help Stress. All welcome.

Discussion took place about reduced rates at West Lothian Leisure for young people. Parents / Carers in West Lothian can also get the same reduced rates through as Carers. It was suggested that Carers of West Lothian be invited along to a future Parent Council meeting to discuss how this is done. Mr Cox mentioned the need to remove barriers / support parents with any forms which needed to be completed for any activities.

There was a lot of discussion about out of school activities for young people with ASN and the range of clubs and activities that are on offer. Parents / carers felt it might be a good idea to collate this information and make it available on Cedarbank School website.

Parents / Carers Views

The final topic of the meeting was to gain parent/carers views using the following four topics:

1. Topic for future parent council meetings? Format? etc
2. What concerns you about the school (if anything)
3. What is good about Cedarbank School / What do you want to see more of?
4. Questions? Ask parent council or teachers a question / anything else?

Below is the output from the session – parents used posits and discussion to make their suggestions. Some of these items will be the subject of future parent council meetings.

1. Items for Future Parent Council Meetings:

This feedback focused around organising events where our young people and families could get together in a safe environment to socialise. This theme came out from all the groups.

The ideas and topics were:

To ask parents if they had any hobbies they would like to share.

To ask parents to share details of services available – e.g. No Limits Club, Carers West Lothian etc.

Fundraising.

Quiz nights. Bingo nights. Guest speakers.

After school club. School youth group. Events where the kids could network.

More family activities. More parent and child in or out of school activities.

More information about guardianship and future for young adults leaving Cedarbank.

2. Any concerns or issues?

Parents raised shared toilets as an issue and concern due to the embarrassment it can cause.

One raised the issue of timing of school events or activities when there are other children in the family who need collected from school etc.

3. Any Questions for the school?

Could we have health and well-being sessions for parents in the evening?

Could we have details on pathways for older pupils?

Could we have separate parent council and fun and separate funding raising meetings, with the funding ones being possibly during the day.

4. What is good about Cedarbank?

Lovely ethos.

Enthusiastic staff.

The nurturing environment to help attainment.

Very open, very supportive.

4b. What you want to see more of?

More events for parents to attend.

More family days at school.

More coffee mornings and for parents and pupils.

More Clubs for kids and social opportunities.

More fundraising events for parents and children to attend.

Beetle drive, pie beans, Bingo, discos monthly.